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Understanding Quantitative History by Loren Haskins; Kirk Jeffrey; Quantitative Methods for Historians by Konrad H. Jarausch; Kenneth A. Hardy

Review by: J. Morgan Kousser

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cases Kindleberger makes bizarre statements, for example, “under certain conditions [not stated], industry will be spurred either by an increase in a tariff or by a decrease” and “entrepreneurs were ready to be stimulated by lower prices or higher, of outputs or inputs” (111, 112). On the other hand Kindleberger, unlike working economic historians, consistently avoids primary sources, drawing his evidence from secondary and, sometimes, tertiary sources (59, 69, 76). Not that true facts go unstated. Indeed, they are laid end to end as far as the eye can see. But they are presented in the style of one damned thing after another in an exposition that lacks both the theoretical and statistical rigor of cliometricians, and the literary grace and nuance of traditional historians.

This is a collection of rambling, speculative, occasionally chatty essays. In the introduction Kindleberger notes that the publication of the volume “has strong overtones of narcissism” (ix). I agree.

Robert Higgs
Seattle University

Understanding Quantitative History. By Loren Haskins and Kirk Jeffrey (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1990) 361 pp. \$27.50 paper

Quantitative Methods for Historians. By Konrad H. Jarausch and Kenneth A. Hardy (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1991) 240 pp. \$37.50 cloth \$11.95 paper

It has been a generation since anyone published a textbook on quantitative methods for historians.¹ Long outmoded by developments in computer technology and statistical techniques, the earlier volumes have neither been comprehensively updated nor replaced. Now, suddenly, we have two new introductory-level texts, both coauthored by a historian and a statistician, both intended for self-study as well as undergraduate and graduate classroom use, both approachable and well written. Which should one choose and why?

Quantitative Methods begins with six chapters by Jarausch which first gently attempt to convince timid historians who are *perhaps tentatively considering* quantifying and analyzing some information, and then provide helpful hints on recording and organizing data. Statistician Hardy then rushes readers at a frantic pace from frequency distributions and cross-tabulations through regression and logit analysis to latent structure analysis in four chapters of roughly twenty-five pages each, filled with graphs but with few equations. Although offering intuitive explanations of these techniques that will seem admirably clear to those who have already studied them, Hardy is so constrained by limited space that he

1 Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, *Historian's Guide to Statistics* (New York, 1971); Roderick Floud, *An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians* (Princeton, N.J., 1973).

can instill in readers neither an ability to use even the simplest methods nor a fundamental preparation for further study. Jarausch concludes with two broader, more philosophical chapters on the connection between quantification and theory-building and on different national styles of doing history. Full of wise saws, and useful for apprentices beginning their first projects, this beautifully produced book will be almost impossible to build a class around, and will not teach anyone to do or to assess quantitative research.

Less grandiose in concepts, methods, and diction, *Understanding Quantitative History* is a genuine collaboration which involves readers from the beginning by inviting them to help analyze tables and graphs from recent books and articles by historians. Do these numbers add up by rows or columns? What is the denominator here? Does the table support the author's hypothesis? Are the numbers in these two rows sufficiently different from each other for us to base an interpretation on? Could the data be presented more effectively? If there is a lot of information, what techniques can we use to make general sense of it all? What steps should analysts go through in formulating and testing a theory, and what steps should readers go through in evaluating what an author did?

Unlike the one rather uninteresting and inconclusive data set on which *Quantitative Methods* concentrates, *Understanding Quantitative History*, which grew out of a 1984 faculty seminar at Carleton College that met to discuss current articles in journals of social scientific history, offers tables and graphs on so many topics that everyone will find something of interest. For each example, the latter book asks a series of commonsensical questions and, in the back of each chapter, provides answers. It takes a strong will to avoid the lure of this game when reading the book.

Compared to *Quantitative Methods*, the other book introduces only a limited number of methods, explicitly treats few metatheoretical issues, and hardly discusses computer software packages. Neither book will fully prepare a fledgling quantitative historian to perform a complete analysis. Nonetheless, because of its enticing, meticulously carried out format *Understanding Quantitative History* is the preferable choice for a text or a self-help manual, and it may even expand the number of quantitative historians. If it does, where will they turn once they have finished it? Now that we have two elementary-level texts, where is the intermediate-level book?

J. Morgan Kousser
California Institute of Technology